MARVEL

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## AND MIKE DEODATO JR.

# THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

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#509

AUDITIONS TOMORROW 10-2

"CATS ALWAYS LIE"

BY FETTES GRAY
THE SHADOW-BOX THEATER,
53RD STREET

--AND I *SAID* TO HIM, I SAID *WHY* ARE YOU *TOUCHING* ME LIKE THAT? WHY ARE YOU *LOOKING* AT ME LIKE THAT?

# Sins Past
## Part One

DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING *BETTER* TO DO WITH YOUR TIME? WELL, HE *LOOKED* AT ME, AND WHEN HE *LOOKED* AT ME--

MARY JANE--

--I JUST *KNEW* THIS WOULD BE--

MARY JANE--

YES?

STOP ACTING.

I DON'T--

IT'S VERY SIMPLE. I SAID STOP ACTING.

NOW TRY IT AGAIN.

THEN HE REACHED OVER AND PUT HIS HAND ON MY *ARM*, AND I *SAID* TO HIM, I SAID *WHY* ARE YOU *TOUCHING* ME LIKE *THAT?* WHY ARE YOU *LOOKING* AT ME LIKE THAT?

DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING *BETTER* TO DO WITH YOUR TIME? WELL, HE *LOOKED* AT ME, AND WHEN HE *LOOKED* AT ME--

THANK YOU, THAT'LL DO.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS GIRL? SHE'S VERY GOOD. I WORKED WITH HER IN SUMMER STOCK LAST YEAR.

I... THANKS.

THANK YOU.

MARY JANE...WAIT.

JUST A SECOND.

WHAT'RE YOU--

TRUST ME.

I TOLD YOU TO STOP ACTING.

YEAH, WELL, BELIEVE ME, YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST ONE TO SUGGEST THAT.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN. I MEANT STOP *ACTING.*

BUT ISN'T THAT--

YOU'VE GOT TWO PEOPLE ON THE DANCE FLOOR. AT ONE END YOU'VE GOT FRED ASTAIRE, AT THE OTHER END A GUY WHO JUST GOT OUT OF DANCE SCHOOL. YOU WATCH THE GUY, AND YOU CAN SEE HIM GOING ONE-TWO-THREE IN HIS HEAD, OVER AND OVER.

HE'S *TRYING* TO *DANCE*.

THEN YOU LOOK AT FRED ASTAIRE...AND HE'S JUST DANCING.

THERE'S TRYING TO DANCE...AND THERE'S DANCING.

STOP TRYING TO ACT. JUST...TELL THE TRUTH.

TRY IT AGAIN.

THEN HE REACHED OVER... AND PUT HIS HAND ON MY ARM, AND I SAID TO HIM--

I SAID...WHY ARE YOU TOUCHING ME LIKE THAT?

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING... ANYTHING BETTER TO DO WITH YOUR TIME? WELL, HE LOOKED AT ME, AND WHEN HE LOOKED AT ME, I JUST...I JUST KNEW, THAT'S ALL. THE WAY WE ALL KNOW, YOU KNOW? WHEN YOU SEE....

WHEN YOU SEE THE EYES YOU WANT TO WAKE UP NEXT TO EVERY DAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

MARY JANE?

YEAH?

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT RIGHT NOW?

MY HUSBAND. AND HOW MUCH I LOVE HIM. HE'S SITTING OUT IN THE LOBBY, WAITING FOR ME.

SO ALL YOU DID WAS TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM, ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM.

YES.

THANK YOU FOR THAT. I JUST...I THINK I JUST LEARNED MORE THAN I GOT OUT OF THE LAST FIFTEEN ACTING CLASSES I TOOK.

WELL, I SHOULD PROBABLY LET YOU--

JUST... ONE LAST THING.

BEFORE YOU GO.

THAT'S ALL YOU EVER HAVE TO DO, MARY JANE. JUST... TAKE THE STAGE, FACE THE LIGHTS... AND TELL THE TRUTH.

MJ? HOW'D IT GO?

AW, JEEZ, MJ...IT'S OKAY... LOOK, IT'S A GROWING EXPERIENCE, RIGHT? YOU KNOW, THE WHOLE TRIAL AND ERROR THING, THEN YOU GET THE WHOLE TRIAL AND CONVICTION THING, THE APPEAL--

NO, PETER, IT'S--

--I GOT THE PART.

YOU GOT THE PART?

I GOT THE PART.

I GOT THE PART!

YOU GOT THE PART!

I GOT THE PART! I GOT THE PART!

I GOT THE PART.

I LOVE YOU.

There are days I love her so much I can't breathe... days when news comes like this, and she's so happy, that...I don't cry, because that's not what I do--

--but I find my eyes just kind of leak, you know? For hours, just on and off.

--AND HE KEEPS SAYING, "STOP ACTING!" AND I THOUGHT, BOY, DON'T I HEAR ENOUGH OF *THAT*.

She's everything to me.

BUT HE WAS RIGHT, HE WAS *SO* RIGHT.

DING DONG

OH, THAT'S THE MAIL...I'LL JUST BE A MOMENT.

ONCE I GOT IT, I MEAN REALLY *GOT* IT, IT JUST SEEMED SO SIMPLE. I JUST HAD TO LEARN TO GET OUT OF MY OWN WAY, I--

ARE YOU OKAY, PETER?

YEAH...JUST, Y'KNOW...LOTS OF POLLEN IN THE AIR TODAY. GO ON.

Everything.

ANYWAY, IT'S A HUGE BREAK FOR ME. IT'S A SMALL THEATER, BUT THE DIRECTOR HAS A GREAT TRACK RECORD FOR PICKING ACTORS. THE MONEY DOESN'T MATTER, THE VENUE DOESN'T MATTER--

--WHAT MATTERS IS THAT IT'S A TREMENDOUS VALIDATION. I CAN LEARN SO MUCH FROM THIS.

...PETER...?

PETER... COULD YOU COME HERE FOR A MOMENT?

SURE THING, AUNT MAY.

PROBABLY ANOTHER SPIDER IN THE BUNDLE OF COUPONS. I'M PRETTY SURE SHE THINKS IT'S MY FAULT SOMEHOW.

OKAY, WHATEVER IT IS, I DIDN'T--

AUNT MAY? WHAT'S WRONG?

I...THINK YOU SHOULD SEE THIS.

IS IT A THREAT OF SOME KIND?

AUNT MAY?

Gwen Stacy
C/O Rue Anders Hotel
1516 Rue Anders
Paris, France

Peter Parker
C/O May Parker
738 Winter Grove Drive
Forest Hills, New York 113
USA

Gwen Stacy
C/O
1516 Rue
Paris, Fran

My hands are shaking as I tear open the envelope. I'm almost afraid to look inside.

But I look anyway. I have to.

Dear Peter--

Dear Peter--

I know you were kind of surprised when I took off for Europe so suddenly four months ago, but I needed some time to think things over. I know, you're probably thinking, what things? Something happened, Peter. Something I didn't expect. Something I didn't plan for. Something...

God, Peter. I don't know what to do, how to tell you this. I'm so afraid that when I tell you, you'll hate me, never want to see me again. I've written this letter six times, but I never seem to find the right words. I tried to call you, but your aunt says you're in Canada for the next few weeks on a story for the Bugle and she doesn't have a number for you.

So I'm sending this to you in care of your aunt so you will be sure to get it when you come home, because if I know you, you'll go there first thing. You've always been so good to her, and to me.

For what I'm about to tell you, Peter, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

YOU OKAY?

YEAH. YEAH, I'M OKAY.

OKAY, LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN, AND THIS TIME LEAVE OUT HALF OF THE LIE.

IN THAT CASE...NOT SO GOOD.

ARE YOU SURE IT'S REALLY FROM HER? THERE'S ALWAYS THE CHANCE--

NO. I CHECKED HER HANDWRITING AGAINST SOME OF THE LETTERS I STILL HAD, BUT THAT WAS JUST A FORMALITY. I'D KNOW HER HANDWRITING ANYWHERE, AND THE WAY SHE CHOSE HER WORDS. IT'S HER.

MAY SAID THERE WAS JUST THE ONE PAGE.

YEAH. IT STOPS JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO TELL ME ABOUT WHATEVER THE HELL WAS SO AWFUL, SO TERRIBLE THAT--

I DON'T GET IT, MJ. I JUST DON'T GET IT.

"IT WAS A CRAZY TIME IN MY LIFE. GWEN HAD GONE ON VACATION BETWEEN SEMESTERS WITHOUT ANY WARNING, AND I ENDED UP IN MONTREAL TALKING TO AN ATTORNEY THERE, TRYING TO FIND OUT WHY DOC OCK WAS SO INTERESTED IN AUNT MAY ALL OF A SUDDEN.

EDITOR'S NOTE: ASM# 119-120

"RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL, I ENDED UP IN A KNOCK-DOWN WITH THE HULK AND BARELY GOT OUT WITH MY SKIN."

SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND... SHE OBVIOUSLY WROTE THIS WHILE SHE WAS STILL IN FRANCE...IF IT WAS SOMETHING THAT BAD, WHY DIDN'T SHE TALK TO YOU ABOUT IT WHEN SHE CAME BACK?

I GUESS THERE WASN'T TIME.

"SHE'D BARELY GOTTEN BACK WHEN HARRY OSBORN OD'd AND HIS FATHER'S EMPIRE WAS FALLING APART...YOU WERE THERE, YOU REMEMBER...IT SEEMED LIKE EVERYTHING WE KNEW WAS CRASHING IN AROUND US."

I KNEW THAT SOMETHING WAS BOTHERING HER, THAT SHE SEEMED UPSET ABOUT SOMETHING, BUT I JUST THOUGHT SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HARRY, I MEAN, WE ALL WERE.

AND THEN...

...AND THEN...

SNAP

...SHE WAS GONE.

IT'S JUST... IT'S SO BIZARRE. I MEAN, I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE POST OFFICE FINDING LOST LETTERS AND DELIVERING THEM YEARS LATER, BUT--

YEAH, SO HAVE I. THERE'S JUST A FEW SMALL PROBLEMS.

PROBLEM NUMBER ONE: SHE NEVER WOULD HAVE SENT JUST THAT ONE PAGE. NOT EVEN BY ACCIDENT.

"THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE. SHE PROBABLY SAT UP ALL NIGHT WRITING, THE WAY SHE SOMETIMES DID, FINISHED THE LETTER, ADDRESSED THE ENVELOPE--

"--AND PUT IT AWAY SOMEWHERE WHILE SHE DECIDED WHETHER OR NOT TO SEND IT."

PROBLEM NUMBER TWO: THE STAMP ON THAT LETTER IS CURRENT. AND PROBLEM NUMBER THREE...IS WORSE THAN PROBLEMS ONE AND TWO.

TAKE A LOOK AT THE POSTMARK.

NEW YORK CITY PM JUN 23 2004

OH...OH, MY....

SOMEONE IS MESSING WITH ME, MJ. NOT WITH SPIDER-MAN, BUT WITH ME.

BUT WHY? WHO'D WANT TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

I DON'T KNOW.

ALL I DO KNOW IS THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH GWEN THAT I NEVER KNEW ABOUT...SOMETHING SO TERRIBLE SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD NEVER TELL ME...AND NOW, SOMEONE IS USING HER PAIN TO TRY AND GET TO ME.

AND I DON'T TAKE REAL WELL TO THAT.

AS SPIDER-MAN, THERE'S A LOT I HAVE TO SWALLOW, AND ACCEPT, AND DEAL WITH, BECAUSE THAT'S THE NATURE OF THE BEAST.

AN AWFUL LOT.

AND AT THE END OF THE DAY, I HAVE TO LET IT GO, SO I CAN COME HOME TO YOU WHOLE AND AT LEAST A LITTLE SANE.

BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN MY LIFE YOU JUST DON'T TOUCH IF YOU WANT TO WALK AWAY WITH YOUR SPINE INTACT.

YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, FIRST, FOREMOST AND FOREVER.

THIS...IS ANOTHER.

I hate this. Not just for me. But for MJ.

She had such wonderful news today, and then this had to happen.

They say you should never talk about old girlfriends in front of your wife. But how many times has Gwen's memory, her importance in my life, come up at us?

Any other woman would've told me to take a hike years ago.

But she's never complained. Not once. Maybe because she knew Gwen, and was also her friend.

And maybe it's because she loves me.

I don't deserve her. But I try, every day, to make up for it.

Somehow, it's never enough.

I wonder sometimes what's worse, having more friends inside this place than out--

--or having been here so many times that I know how to find each and every one of them in the dark, even without spider-sense?

HEY, GWEN.

I GOT YOUR LETTER. WELL, MOST OF IT, ANYWAY. I--

I JUST DON'T GET IT, GWEN. I MEAN, I THOUGHT WE COULD TALK. I THOUGHT WE COULD TALK ABOUT ANY-THING AND EVERYTHING. BIG STUFF, SMALL STUFF, SILLY STUFF....

...WHAT COULD BE SO TERRIBLE, SO AWFUL, THAT YOU COULDN'T JUST TALK TO ME ABOUT IT? WHAT WAS SO BAD THAT YOU HAD TO GO TO FRANCE, OF ALL PLACES?

I MEAN, OKAY, JERSEY WOULD'VE BEEN WORSE, BUT STILL--

GWEN

WHATEVER IT WAS, I WOULD'VE TAKEN CARE OF IT. I WOULD'VE MADE IT GO AWAY. WOULD'VE MADE IT BETTER.

I LOVED YOU.

I WOULD'VE DONE ANYTHING FOR YOU.

We're not alone.

COME TO APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR SINS, PARKER?

BECAUSE IF YOU DID... YOU'RE TOO LATE.

WAY TOO LATE.

It's a male voice. I don't recognize it. Spider-sense is going crazy, though.

WHO IS IT? WHO'S OUT THERE?

I'M WONDERING WHAT'S MORE INSULTING, THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHO THIS IS...OR THAT YOU DO AND YOU'RE TOO MUCH OF A COWARD TO SAY SO?

Have to keep him talking while I triangulate in on his position. Just one problem.

His voice is coming from the east, but I can feel someone to the west. Thing is...the person to the west feels just like the person to the east.

HARD TO SAY... WHY DON'T YOU COME ON OUT WHERE I CAN SEE YOU, AND WE CAN FIND OUT TOGETHER?

So are there really two people out there, or just one, disguising his presence?

SUIT YOURSELF!

I feel movement... muscles tightening, the rush of air behind me...can't let on, though...whoever it is, they know who I am, and if I do anything that can connect Peter to Spider-Man, that would be bad--

--just have to take it while I figure out what to--

WHUFFF!

He's fast... real fast--

HOW DOES IT FEEL, HUH? HOW DOES IT *FEEL* TO KNOW YOU'RE ALONE AND NOBODY'S GOING TO HELP YOU? HUH?

HOW DOES IT *FEEL* KNOWING YOU'RE GOING TO DIE ALONE?

--not just fast, strong-- too strong for me to take this for very long--

Secret identity or not... if I don't fight back hard, he's going to kill me.

DON'T KNOW...AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE FINDING OUT.

Movement--
behind--

UNGH!

YOU'VE DRAWN FIRST BLOOD. GOOD WORK.

LET'S FINISH IT.

They move like one... fast and strong and deadly.

Without my webbing...nothing to jump onto...it's hand to hand.

Two of them, one of me, it's only a matter of time before one of them gets lucky and--

AAAAGGHH...

That's it...got to get the hell out of here, regroup--

One chance. One jump. Make it a good one.

Made it!

Just hope it was dark enough that they didn't catch what happened...

DID YOU SEE?

YES, IT EXPLAINS A LOT, DOESN'T IT?

YEAH...YEAH, IT DOES. BUT AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT JUST GIVES US ONE MORE REASON TO KILL HIM.

"AND LIKE I'VE ALWAYS SAID, IF YOU'RE GOING TO KILL A MAN--

"--YOU SHOULD HAVE ALL THE REASONS YOU CAN GET."

#510

HOW DOES IT FEEL, KNOWING YOU'RE GOING TO DIE ALONE?

There's no question they were waiting for me.

Waiting for me there, right there.

GWEN

Where she was.

Waiting for me the very day that a letter came from Gwen, the first page of a letter she wrote years ago, and meant to send, but which didn't show up until yesterday.

I know you were kind of surprised when I took off for Europe so suddenly four months ago, but I needed some time to think things over. I know, you're probably thinking, what things? Something's happened, Peter. Something I didn't expect. Something...

...r, Peter. I don't know what to do ...to tell you this. I'm so afraid that ...can I tell you, you'll hate me, never ...ant to see me again. I've written this ...letter six times, but I never seem to find the right words. I tried to call you, but your aunt says you're in Canada for the next few weeks on a story for the Bugle and she doesn't have a number for you.

So I'm sending this to you in care of your aunt so you will be sure to get it when you come home, because if I know you, you'll go there first thing. You've always been so good to her, and to me.

...for what I'm about to t... Peter, I'm sorry.

No question that there's a connection.

The only question is...what? And why? Why are two people I don't think I've ever even met out to kill Peter Parker?

ITCHES

# Sins Past

## Part Two

WHEN YOU DIDN'T COME HOME LAST NIGHT, I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND YOU HERE. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YEAH.

NO.

IT'S... A LONG STORY.

NYC

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE GOT SOME LICKS IN. WERE YOU ON PATROL, OR--

NO. WHOEVER IT WAS, THEY WERE AFTER PETER, NOT SPIDER-MAN. SO I COULDN'T CUT LOOSE. MOST I COULD DO WAS HOLD MY OWN AND RUN LIKE HELL.

I DON'T THINK I GAVE ANYTHING AWAY, BUT STILL--

YEAH. DAMNED IF I KNOW WHAT, THOUGH.

AND YOU THINK IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS?

SEEMS LIKE EVERY TIME I THINK I'VE DEALT WITH MY GUILT OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO GWEN, EVERY TIME I'VE JUST ABOUT MANAGED TO PUT IT BEHIND ME, SOMETHING HAPPENS TO BRING IT ALL BACK UP AGAIN...AND I'M RIGHT BACK ON THAT BRIDGE AGAIN.

WATCHING HER DIE.

IT'S--

PETER?

HAVE YOU LOOKED AT THE BACK OF THIS PAGE?

YEAH, IT'S EMPTY. SO WHAT'S THE--

NO, I MEAN, HAVE YOU REALLY LOOKED AT IT?

TOUCHED IT?

THERE ARE LITTLE INDENTATIONS ON THE BACK. MAYBE WHEN SHE WROTE THE NEXT PAGE OF THE LETTER SHE PUT IT ON TOP OF THIS ONE.

I DO THE SAME THING. FINISH ONE PAGE, TURN IT OVER, PUT THE NEXT ONE ON TOP, KEEP WRITING, TURN THAT ONE OVER...IT HELPS ME KEEP THE PAGES IN ORDER.

MAYBE IF YOU DO THAT TRICK WHERE YOU RUN A PENCIL OVER THE IMPRESSIONS--

NO. THE PAPER IS OLD, AND THE IMPRESSIONS ARE FAINT. IF I DO THAT, I COULD DESTROY WHATEVER'S THERE. IT WOULD TAKE A FORENSICS LAB TO--

PETER? MARY JANE? BREAKFAST.

WE SHOULD GO DOWN. IT'S THURSDAY. AUNT MAY ALWAYS MAKES CORNED BEEF HASH ON THURSDAYS, AND SHE HATES WHEN IT GETS COLD.

IT CAN WAIT TWO MINUTES. I NEED TO FIX YOUR FACE. I KNOW THAT *SHE* KNOWS, BUT...

YEAH, IT'S EASIER WHEN SHE DOESN'T SEE THE RESULTS.

THIS IS WHY WE MAKE A GOOD COMBINATION, YOU KNOW. I LOOK AT THE OBVIOUS PAGE, YOU LOOK AT THE ONE THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANYTHING ON IT.

I HAVE A HIGH PAIN THRESHOLD, AND HEAL FAST, BUT YOU MAKE SURE THE BRUISES DON'T--

PETER, STOP TALKING, I'M TRYING TO GET THIS FOUNDATION ON.

OKAY.

YOU'RE SMUDGING.

I KNOW. DEAL.

THERE YOU ARE. I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D COME DOWN. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH EGGS OVER MEDIUM, PETER, YOU CAN'T WARM THEM UP AND YOU SHOULDN'T EAT THEM WHEN THEY'RE COLD BECAUSE--

--WELL, THERE'S JUST SOMETHING DISREPUTABLE ABOUT EGGS OVER MEDIUM WHEN THEY GET COLD, THAT'S ALL.

YES'M.

OH, AND SOMEONE LEFT THAT ON THE DOOR FOR YOU.

I FOUND IT WHEN I WENT TO GET THE PAPER.

FOR ME?

PETER PARKER

ACCORDING TO THE FORECAST, WE'RE IN FOR MORE RAIN ON AND OFF FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK. NOT A BAD THING, REALLY, SINCE IT'S BEEN SO DRY LATELY.

IF APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS, I WONDER WHAT JUNE SHOWERS BRING?

WHAT DO YOU THINK, PETER?

PETER...?

AUNT MAY, DID SOMEONE HELP YOU CARRY YOUR GROCERIES HOME LATELY?

WHY, YES...A NICE YOUNG MAN WAS CROSSING THE STREET BY THE STORE AND...WELL, I WAS HAVING A LITTLE DIFFICULTY WITH THE BAGS, AND HE OFFERED TO CARRY THEM FOR ME.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT HIM? HOW HE LOOKED?

NO, NOT REALLY. HE WAS VERY WELL-SPOKEN, THOUGH. SAID HE WAS THINKING OF MOVING TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD, ASKED ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED HERE, WHAT'S IN THE AREA...

HE ASKED ABOUT MY FAMILY, AND WE TALKED ABOUT YOU, OF COURSE, HOW PROUD I AM OF YOU, THAT SORT OF THING.

UH-HUH.

MJ, DID A YOUNG WOMAN ASK YOU FOR DIRECTIONS LATELY?

I DON'T THINK--

NO, WAIT, YES...YES, A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO. SHE SAID SHE WAS LOST. WHY?

PETER? WHY DO YOU ASK?

WE CAN KILL THEM WHENEVER WE WANT.

NO REASON.

WELL, THIS IS JUST LIKE THE AMAZING KARNAK, ISN'T IT? OPEN AN ENVELOPE AND THE QUESTIONS START.

I MISS JOHNNY CARSON.

"SO GUESS WHO JUST GOT PROMOTED?"

WILD GUESS, BUT... YOU?

ME. THEY GOT ME HEADING UP MY OWN UNIT IN VICE STARTING MONDAY.

THAT'S GREAT, BERT, BECAUSE IF THERE'S ANYBODY KNOWS ABOUT VICE, IT'S YOU.

THAT'S REAL CUTE, LAMONT. IT'S NOT MY FAULT THEY KEEP PASSING YOU UP FOR PROMOTION. I GUESS THEY SEE I GOT, Y'KNOW, UNIQUE SKILLS.

UNIQUE SKILLS.

YEAH. LIKE...I THINK FAST ON MY FEET. I DON'T BUCK THE SYSTEM, UNLIKE SOME PEOPLE I COULD NAME, I STICK WITH THE PARTY LINE, AND I'M OBSERVANT. I SEE THINGS. I'M A NATURAL.

NOTHING GETS PAST ME, YOU KNOW?

ROOF TEN MINUTES

YEAH, I KNOW.

IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS SAID ABOUT YOU, BERT.

YOU'VE GOT A 128K BRAIN IN A 64 MEGABYTE WORLD.

THANKS, LAMONT.

WAITAMINNIT... 128, THAT'S BIGGER THAN 64, SO THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT?

LAMONT?

LAMONT.

I LIKE THE SIGN. DIDN'T I SEE YOU DOWN ON 37TH LAST WEEK WITH ONE OF THOSE? "WILL STICK TO THINGS FOR FOOD."

YEAH, THAT WAS ME. I'M KNOWN FOR THAT.

YOU GOT YOUR SERIOUS VOICE ON. SOMETHING WRONG?

I NEED YOUR HELP.

THAT I FIGURED.

THING IS, THIS ONE IS KIND OF...PERSONAL. AND I STILL DON'T KNOW JUST HOW FAR I CAN TRUST YOU.

TRUE.

I THINK THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU GIVE ME ALL THE REASONS I SHOULD TRUST YOU.

NOPE. I AM WHAT I AM, I DO WHAT I DO. I DON'T LIKE COSTUMES, BUT THAT'S STRICTLY A PROFESSIONAL THING, NOTHING PERSONAL. BOTTOM LINE, I'M A GOOD COP. YOU EITHER TRUST ME OR YOU DON'T.

I LEFT A WITTY CONVERSATION WITH A CO-WORKER ABOUT DIDACTICISM VERSUS RELATIVE POSITIVISM SO I COULD COME UP HERE. I CAN ALWAYS GO BACK DOWN AGAIN.

I CAN GET TO A LAB, BUT THIS REQUIRES SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT, AND I DON'T HAVE TIME. CAN YOU GET IT TO FORENSICS, SEE WHAT THEY CAN TURN UP?

YEAH, I CAN DO THAT.

I'M...HELPING A FRIEND WHO'S IN A SITUATION. THE INFORMATION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS IS PRIVATE, SO I'VE WEBBED THE PAGE TO THIS PIECE OF STEEL. THE ONLY WAY TO TAKE IT OFF IS TO TEAR IT. IF I COME BACK AND FIND IT'S BEEN TORN...

...IT WOULD BE VERY BAD. FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY, ANYBODY YOU'VE EVEN TALKED TO IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

WE TALKING LATENT HANDWRITING IMPRESSIONS?

IF THIS IS PRIVATE...PERSONAL... AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE...YOU'RE TAKING A HELL OF A CHANCE TURNING THIS OVER TO ME.

DON'T REMIND ME.

THE WEBBING ONLY LASTS TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. I'LL BE BACK BEFORE IT DISSOLVES.

"SO YOU'RE SURE YOU CAN DO THIS?"

YEAH. IF THERE'S ANYTHING WRITTEN HERE, I CAN FIND IT.

IT'D BE A LOT EASIER IF I COULD LOOK AT THE OTHER SIDE, GIVE ME A SENSE OF THE HANDWRITING STYLE.

NO CAN DO. I MADE A PROMISE. DO THE BEST YOU CAN WITHOUT TEARING THE PAGE. AND WATCH THE WEBBING, OKAY?

WILL DO. ANYTHING ELSE?

NO, I...

YEAH. TAKE ONE STRAND OF THE WEBBING-- *JUST* ONE STRAND, NO MORE-- AND GIVE ME A COMPLETE CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN SOMETHING LIKE THAT CAN COME IN HANDY.

YES?

JUST WANTED TO CHECK IN, MAKE SURE YOU WERE OKAY.

I'M GOOD. WE'RE ABOUT TO START THE READ-THROUGH. HOW'RE YOU HOLDING UP?

I'M OKAY.

YOU SURE? I CAN FIND A REASON TO GET OUT OF THIS IF--

NO. YOU'VE WORKED SO HARD TO GET THIS PART OFF-BROADWAY. WE CAN'T STOP LIVING JUST BECAUSE--

I KNOW. I'M JUST SAYING.

IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO --

JUST STOP BY ANNA'S ON YOUR WAY IN, MAKE SURE MAY IS OKAY. I'LL KEEP CALLING, JUST TO BE SURE, BUT--

WHOEVER THESE PEOPLE ARE, THEY'RE INTERESTED IN YOU, NOT US. THE PICTURES PROVE THAT IF THEY REALLY WANTED TO HURT US, THEY COULD'VE DONE IT BY NOW. MAY IS IN GOOD HANDS. WE'LL BE OKAY. WHAT'LL HELP IS FINDING OUT WHO THEY ARE AND STOPPING THEM. YOU CAN ONLY DO THAT OUT THERE.

I KNOW, IT'S JUST...

I KNOW.

YOU GOING TO CALL HER?

YEAH. AS SOON AS I HANG UP.

I LOVE YOU.

I LOVE YOU TOO.

NOKIA

ANNA

555-7020

BOOP

DO YOU WANT ANY MORE TEA, MAY?

NO, I'M FINE, ANNA, THANKS.

...RING... RING... RING....

...RING... RING- CLICK!

HELLO, PARKER.

NOKIA

I... WHO IS THIS?

WE HAVE YOUR AUNT. DID YOU REALLY THINK MOVING HER ACROSS TOWN WOULD DO ANY GOOD AT ALL? DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HIDE ANYTHING FROM US--

--SPIDER-MAN?

The voice is cold, hard, smug. I feel my stomach knot up into a fist.

LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU KNOW, OR WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW... BUT IF YOU HURT HER, IF YOU DO *ANYTHING* TO HER--

YOU WANT HER? COME AND GET HER. 1445 EAST FRAMPTON. YOU HAVE TEN MINUTES. IN ELEVEN, SHE'S DEAD.

CLICK!

The address is clear across town.

Ten minutes.

I can make it.

I have to make it.

PHONE'S ALL FIXED, MA'AM.

OH, GOOD. THAT DIDN'T TAKE VERY LONG AT ALL. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME LEMONADE? IT MUST BE VERY HOT UP THERE.

NO THANKS, MA'AM. I HAVE TO BE SOMEPLACE IN, OH....

...ABOUT NINE MINUTES.

Spider-sense is going wild, but I don't need that to know I'm walking into something bad. But there's ten seconds left, and I don't have any choice.

The only thing I can do is *NOT* do it their way, and not go in the front door.

Just have to make my *OWN* door.

First thing is to find May and get her out of here. After that--

...UNNHHH...

AUNT MAY...?

COME ON, WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU--

--OUT OF--

WAIT, SOMETHING'S--

--WRONG--

BOOM!

CLICK!

I can feel blood running from my ears...ringing...from the blast...deafening...teeth feel loose...taste of blood in my throat...

...have to keep moving...have to get out of here before--

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE HELPLESS?

--UNGH!

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE ABANDONED? DESERTED? ALONE?

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Have to buy time to recover...get my strength back, my bearings...keep him talking--

YEAH, THAT'S IT. STAND UP SO I CAN PUT YOU DOWN AGAIN.

I DON'T...I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? I...I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU...

YOU DON'T. EVEN. *KNOW.* ME.

YAARRGH!

Holy--

KILL YOU-- SWEAR TO GOD I'M GOING TO KILL YOU--

GABE--

BASTARD--

GABRIEL!

WE HAD A DEAL, REMEMBER? THIS ISN'T THE TIME. NOT YET.

I KNOW--

LET IT GO.

PLEASE.

ALL RIGHT, SARAH. BUT JUST FOR YOU.

I SHOULD THANK YOU, YOU KNOW. WE CAME A LONG WAY TO KILL TWO PEOPLE. BUT NOW WE REALIZE WE ONLY HAVE TO KILL ONE PERSON.

YOU.

HERE'S WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. WE'RE GOING TO DESTROY YOU. WE'RE GOING TO DESTROY EVERYTHING YOU CARE ABOUT. AND WHEN WE'RE FINISHED, ONLY THEN... WE'LL *KILL YOU.*

BUT DON'T YOU WORRY...BEFORE WE KILL YOU, WE'LL MAKE DAMNED SURE YOU KNOW WHO WE ARE... WHY WE'RE DOING THIS...

...AND WHY YOU *DESERVE* IT.

SEE YOU AROUND.

NO...I WON'T LET YOU...I WON'T--

--WON'T LET YOU...

"IS HE STILL UNCONSCIOUS?"

HE GOES IN AND OUT.

HIS FATHER DOESN'T WANT TO TAKE HARRY TO A HOSPITAL. I THINK HE'S AFRAID THAT THE STOCKS IN HIS COMPANY WILL FALL EVEN FURTHER IF IT COMES OUT THAT THE FAMOUS NORMAN OSBORN'S SON HAD A RUN-IN WITH LSD.

I SHOULD TALK TO NORMAN--

NO... PETER, DON'T.

BUT--

PLEASE. IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD. AND I JUST...I CAN'T FACE HIM RIGHT NOW. I'M...I'M EXHAUSTED, WE BOTH ARE.

CAN WE JUST...GO SOMEWHERE FOR A BIT?

SURE...I'M SORRY, I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT. YOU AND MJ, YOU'VE BEEN HERE ALL DAY, MAKING SURE HE'S OKAY. YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.

I'LL CATCH UP, I HAVE TO GET MY PURSE.

I RAN INTO NORMAN ON THE WAY IN, HE WAS HALF-CRAZY...I DON'T GET IT, HE SEEMED OKAY THE LAST FEW MONTHS, BUT IT'S LIKE SOMETHING INSIDE HIM HAS SNAPPED SUDDENLY... I DON'T KNOW WHAT...

PETER--

--DO YOU LOVE ME?

WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT? OF COURSE I LOVE YOU.

WOULD YOU LOVE ME NO MATTER WHAT I TOLD YOU? NO MATTER WHAT MAY HAPPEN BETWEEN US?

OF COURSE I WOULD, WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT? DON'T BE SILLY.

IT'S NOT--

OKAY, READY. LET'S GET THE HECK OUT OF DODGE BEFORE THIS GETS TOO WEIRD EVEN FOR THE THREE MUSKETEERS.

YOU'RE MIXING METAPHORS.

WHATEVER.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE--

I'M...I'M FINE, PETER. THERE'S TIME. THERE'S ALWAYS TIME.

"She's doomed, do you hear me! Doomed!"

AND SO ARE YOU!

NOOO!

ROMANTIC IDIOT.

Romantic idiot.

Romantic idiot.

GWEN...? GWEN, I...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHAT DID I DO? WHAT...

WHAT DID I DO...?

I...

What happened to you?

I HAD...I'VE BEEN HAVING A BAD DAY. A REAL BAD DAY.

YEAH, I GOT THAT PART. LISTEN, YOU NEED A DOCTOR, OR--

I'LL BE FINE. DID YOU FIND ANYTHING ON THE LETTER?

YEAH, WE DID. YOU'LL NOTE WE DIDN'T DISTURB THE FRONT, SO I GUESS MY FAMILY CAN RELAX NOW, RIGHT?

ABOUT THAT, I'M SORRY, I--

FORGET IT. I'VE SAID WORSE.

YOU SAID THIS WAS A FRIEND OF YOURS IN TROUBLE?

YEAH. WHY?

WE RAN THIS THROUGH EVERYTHING WE HAD--INFRARED, ULTRAVIOLET, SOME 3-D MODELING SOFTWARE THE BOYS JUST GOT IN-- BUT WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO PULL A FEW WORDS OUT OF THE LATENT IMPRESSIONS ON THE OTHER SIDE.

IF THIS GUY IS A FRIEND OF YOURS, IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE. THE OLD-FASHIONED KIND.

I'm sorry, Peter

months ago

should have told you after I found out

couldn't

I was pregnant

had to get away, decide what to

you were in canada, and

the babies came a month early.

I have two children, Peter.

A boy and a girl,

Gabriel, and Sarah.

couldn't

I was pregnant

had to get away, decide

you were in c

the babies came

I have two children,

A boy and a girl,

Gabriel, and Sarah.

Can't be...it can't be... the two who attacked me, they're....

No...dear God...no...

#511

months ago
Should have told you
found out
couldn't
I was pregnant
had to get away, decide w
you were in canada, a
babies came a month
two children, peter
and a girl,
gabriel, and s

Can't be. Can't be. It can't be.

# Sins Past
Part Three

The two who've been trying to kill me...trying to destroy Peter Parker's life...they can't be Gwen's kids. They--

Even if she did have kids, they'd still be children, they wouldn't have aged enough to--

Unless they weren't born normal kids to begin with. Unless...

I have to find out. I have to know for sure.

I have to.

CREEEEAAK

MJ? MJ, ARE YOU AWAKE?

MMMM? NO...NO, I WAS ASLEEP, I...WHAT TIME IS IT?

HALF-PAST REALLY FREAKING EARLY. BUT YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO GET UP EARLY SO YOU COULD GO WORK OUT BEFORE REHEARSAL--

RIGHT, RIGHT...

...OW...

...THE LIGHT HURTS US....

YOU JUST STAY THERE. HOW ABOUT I BRING YOU BREAKFAST IN BED? NOTHING TOO HEAVY... TOAST, ORANGE JUICE, COFFEE, PTERODACTYL EGGS--

I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T.

IS MY COOKING THAT BAD?

NO, IT'S JUST THAT EVERY TIME YOU OFFER TO BRING ME BREAKFAST IN BED, IT'S A PRELUDE TO SAYING YOU CAN'T STAY.

I--

PETER? ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH, I'M--

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN CRYING.

JUST TIRED. IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT, AND I'M--

I'M JUST TIRED, THAT'S ALL.

AND I... I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T STAY.

YEAH. I KNOW.

I'D...BETTER GET THOSE EGGS GOING. THE HARD PART IS FINDING A FREE-RANGE PTERODACTYL AT THIS HOUR OF THE MORNING.

THEN CATCHING IT.

THEN SQUEEZING THE EGGS OUT OF IT.

AS IF THAT WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH, LAST TIME IT TURNED OUT TO BE A MALE PTERODACTYL. WE'RE GOING OUT ON OUR THIRD DATE ON WEDNESDAY. I--

PETER?

YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU, RIGHT? AND THAT THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T TELL ME, RIGHT?

YEAH, I KNOW. I--

I KNOW. I LOVE YOU, TOO.

BACK IN A FLASH.

He always tries to protect me. It's what he ***DOES***.

He doesn't understand.

It's not that I don't want to be protected, because sometimes I do.

But sometimes ***I*** want to protect ***HIM***, and I can't do that when he's too busy protecting ***ME***. When he's keeping secrets.

But I have to respect his secrets. Because that's what ***I*** do. I keep people's secrets.

But what if I'm not sure I should keep them anymore?

GWEN STACY.

I CAN'T DO THIS.

I HAVE TO DO THIS.

I HAVE TO KNOW.

I HAVE TO.

HAVE TO.

FORGIVE ME, GWEN. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO BE SURE. AND I KNOW...I KNOW YOU'D *WANT* ME TO BE SURE.

AAAAAHHH!

GOD...
GOD...GOD
GODGODGOD
GOD...

"BASTARD."

WHAT?
WHAT'S HE
DOING?

GABE? I
SAID WHAT'S
HE DOING?

CONFIRMING
HIS WORST
NIGHTMARE.

THEN HE
KNOWS?

IF HE
DIDN'T KNOW
BEFORE, HE KNOWS
NOW, SARAH. HE
KNOWS NOW.

"SEE, THERE ARE
ALWAYS TWO WAYS TO FIND
OUT THE TRUTH. THE REAL,
TOTAL AND ABSOLUTE TRUTH."

THE FIRST IS TO ASK A CAT.

WHY A CAT?

MOVE DOWNSTAGE RIGHT ON THAT, JEREMY. TAKE IT AGAIN.

RIGHT.

WHY A CAT?

BECAUSE CATS ALWAYS LIE. ASK A CAT A QUESTION, AND THE TRUTH IS THE OPPOSITE OF WHATEVER ANSWER YOU GET BACK.

BUT CATS CAN'T TALK.

THAT'S WHAT THEY *WANT* YOU TO BELIEVE. SINCE CATS ALWAYS LIE, AND EVERYONE KNOWS CATS CAN'T SPEAK, THEN THE TRUTH IS THAT THEY *CAN* SPEAK, AND DO, ALL THE TIME. MOSTLY ABOUT US. WELL, THAT AND FOOD.

AROUND HERE GOOD?

YES. GO ON.

SO WHAT'S THE SECOND WAY OF FINDING OUT WHAT THE TRUTH IS?

I LOOK IN YOUR EYES.

AND?

AND--

--I APPLY *EXACTLY* THE SAME RULE.

GREAT, THEN BLACKOUT, CURTAIN, AND WE'RE OUT OF ACT ONE.

WE'LL RECONVENE TOMORROW AT NINE TO TACKLE ACT TWO.

NINE? COULDN'T WE MAKE IT TEN--

WHY? DO YOU HAVE SOME OTHER PLAY YOU PREFER TO BE REHEARSING FOR?

NO.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO?

NO.

I EXPECT EVERYONE TO BE HERE AT NINE SHARP. ALERT, PREPARED, AND MOST OF ALL... SOBER.

THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW WHAT I MEAN... KNOW WHAT I MEAN. AND THAT'S ALL I'M GOING TO SAY ABOUT IT UNTIL NINE OH-FIVE TOMORROW MORNING. HAVE A GOOD NIGHT.

JERK.

CARE TO TRY THAT LINE-READING AGAIN? I DON'T THINK THEY HEARD YOU IN THE CHEAP SEATS.

YOU DON'T THINK I'D SAY IT TO HIS FACE? I WILL.

IN MY VERY FIRST TONY ACCEPTANCE SPEECH. I'VE A LIST.

A LONG ONE.

LISTEN, MARY JANE, A FEW OF US WERE GOING TO GET TOGETHER AT MY PLACE, GO OVER A FEW SCENES. YOU'RE WELCOME TO--

I CAN'T, JEREMY. I HAVE... THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ON MY MIND, I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF IT. NEXT TIME?

YEAH. SURE THING.

WELL, SOMEONE'S A PRIMA DONNA, THAT'S FOR SURE. WHICH JUST CONFIRMS WHAT I'D HEARD. THINKS SHE'S ABOVE IT ALL, DOESN'T SHE?

I MEAN, SHE'S A *MODEL*, SHE'S DONE THE WHOLE *HOLLYWOOD* THING...DID YOU *SEE* THAT MOVIE SHE WAS IN, THE LOBSTER MAN, WHATEVER...

SHE'S THE KIND WHO *ALWAYS* HAD IT EASY. GOT *EVERYTHING* SHE WANTED. AND LIKES THE ROYAL TREATMENT.

FOR THE NAME VALUE, SHE PROBABLY HAD THEM *THROWING* PLAYS AT HER.

BUT OBVIOUSLY NOT HARD ENOUGH.

"SOME PEOPLE YOU HAVE TO HANDLE THE WAY YOU HANDLE A FRENCH POODLE.

"BAD DOGGIE. STAY WHERE YOU BELONG.

"OR IT'S WHAP-WHAP-WHAP WITH A ROLLED-UP PAPER."

AT LEAST, THAT'S HOW I FEEL ABOUT IT. BUT DON'T YOU AGREE?

THIS MAY SURPRISE YOU, BUT AS A MATTER OF FACT, WILLIAM--

--I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.

WAIT A MINUTE...WHAT'RE YOU...PUT THAT DOWN...

YEAH... YEAH, I'LL BE HOME IN HALF AN HOUR. GREAT. WE'LL BE THERE IN PLENTY OF TIME.

WHAP-WHAP

GET HIM!

AAAAAHHHH!

OW! OW! OW! OW!

GET HIM!

GET HIM!

WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP

WHAP-WHA

ACTORS.

QG

My hands are shaking. Damn it, my hands are shaking.

Can't afford to make any mistakes.

Can't go through this again.

GENETIC TEST
EQUIPMENT
HANDLE WITH CARE.

I just can't.

Not a lot of genetic material to use, so I can't waste any of it.

An amateur will use gloves to make sure no fingerprints get on the envelope... forgetting that when he licks the stamp or the flap, he leaves behind more than enough traces of DNA for a positive identification or cross-match. So half the genetic material I need is ready to go from the letters they sent to May's house.

Unfortunately, the longer trace DNA sits on paper, the less useable material you can extract. Which is why Gwen's old letters weren't viable...why it became necessary to--

--to--

--engage other means.

Because whatever they've said, whatever they may believe, whatever I may have read into this, there's no proof that they're Gwen's--

--Gwen's kids.

And if they are...if they *ARE*, then...

No. Don't jump ahead. Not yet. A scientist goes from question to question. And we still have to definitively answer question one:

*ARE* these two in fact Gwen's children? If the answer is no, then the rest is irrelevant. But if the answer is yes, then question two is--

WE KNEW YOU WOULD COME HERE.

WELL, NOT NECESSARILY HERE IN THIS EXACT BUILDING... BUT WE KNEW YOU'D COME TO A PLACE LIKE THIS SOONER OR LATER. SO WE MADE A LIST OF THE BEST CANDIDATES AND--

--AND WELL, HERE WE ARE.

LISTEN, I--

NO, *YOU* LISTEN. BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.

I TOLD MY BROTHER I WAS GOING IN. HE'LL BE HERE ANY TIME NOW.

YEAH, WELL, IF YOU THINK THAT'S GOING TO KEEP ME HERE--

I SAID *LISTEN.*

HE WANTS TO PROLONG THIS. HE DOESN'T WANT TO JUST KILL YOU. HE WANTS TO MAKE YOU SUFFER. HE WANTS YOU TO SEE EVERYONE YOU LOVE DIE AROUND YOU. THEN, AND ONLY THEN, WILL HE COME FOR YOU.

HE'S YOUR BROTHER. DON'T YOU WANT WHAT HE WANTS?

I--

I JUST WANT THIS OVER WITH.

DON'T YOU?

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. I KNOW *WHAT* YOU ARE, AND WHAT YOU'VE *DONE*. AND IF YOU HAVE EVEN A SHRED OF DECENCY, YOU'LL DO THE RIGHT THING.

YEAH? AND WHAT'S THAT?

YOU'LL LET ME KILL YOU. RIGHT HERE. RIGHT NOW.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE PEOPLE YOU SAY YOU CARE ABOUT. BECAUSE YOU CAN'T PROTECT THEM FOREVER, AND GABE IS VERY PATIENT. HE'LL WAIT. SOONER OR LATER HE'LL HAVE HIS OPENING--

--AND ONE OF THEM WILL DIE. THEN ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, AND...

AND HE'LL KILL THEM ALL. UNLESS YOU LET ME DO THIS. IF YOU'RE GONE, HE HAS NO REASON TO GO AFTER THE OTHERS.

YOU HAVE THE GUN. WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

CLICK-CLACK!

YOU'RE TOO FAST. WE BOTH KNOW IT. YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT IT WILLINGLY.

IF YOU'RE MAN ENOUGH TO PUT THE LIVES OF OTHERS AHEAD OF YOUR OWN FOR A CHANGE.

FOR A *CHANGE?* LISTEN, I--

DING!

WHAT THE--

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
NOW!
UNGH!
GET OFF--
LET GO OF THE GUN... LET GO--
Damn she's strong--got it in a death grip--got to get it loose before--
AGGGH!
BLAM!
That's enough... got to stop pulling my punches...stop right--
--NOW!
AH!
Got it!
OH, NO YOU DON'T... YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE...NOT UNTIL WE--
NO... OH, GOD, NO...

HAPPY NOW?

GABE THINKS I LOOK JUST LIKE THE PICTURES WE'VE SEEN OF MY MOM.

WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?

I--

No...the windows... he's outside the--

DOWN!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? ARE YOU--

YEAH. WELL.

THERE YOU GO.

DNA RESULTS:
CROSS-MATCH CONFIRMED
TO WITHIN .00001219

It's true. It's true. It's true.

It's true.

"WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU *DOING* UP THERE?"

I...I MADE A MISTAKE. I GOT TOO CLOSE, AND HE FOUND ME. YOU GOT THERE JUST IN TIME.

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, WE CAN'T TAKE CHANCES LIKE THAT. YOU *KNOW* WHAT HE IS, WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF DOING.

DID HE HURT YOU?

NO. HE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE.

DID HE SEE YOUR FACE?

YES.

AND I'LL BET YOU LOOKED REAL FAMILIAR TO HIM, DIDN'T YOU?

YES.

WELL, IT JUST CONFIRMS WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW. WHAT HE WAS CONFIRMING FOR HIMSELF UP IN THAT LAB.

HE'S OUR FATHER, AND HE ABANDONED US. DESERTED OUR MOTHER AND CAUSED HER DEATH. AND HE'S GOING TO PAY FOR THAT, SARAH.

"HE'S GOING TO LOSE EVERYTHING HE LOVES... JUST AS WE DID."

HELLO, PETER.

MJ? I--

I READ IT. I KNOW I SHOULDN'T HAVE, BUT I...I HAD TO, PETER.

I KNOW WHO THEY ARE NOW, PETER.

THEN YOU HAVE TO KNOW...YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME, MJ...

ANA PAULA

I SWEAR TO GOD, MJ, THEY'RE NOT MY CHILDREN. GWEN AND I DIDN'T... WE NEVER--

I KNOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO CONVINCE ME, PETER. I KNOW YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH.

BECAUSE I KNOW WHO THE *REAL* FATHER OF GWEN STACY'S CHILDREN IS.

#512

# SINS PAST PART FOUR

YOU...YOU WHAT?

I SAID, I KNOW WHO THE REAL FATHER OF GWEN STACY'S CHILDREN IS.

MJ, DO YOU REALIZE... AND BE REAL CAREFUL HERE...DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE *SAYING?*

BECAUSE EITHER YOU JUST FOUND THIS OUT, AND I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW, OR--

--OR YOU'VE KNOWN ALL THIS TIME.

AND YOU'VE NEVER TOLD ME.

SO WHICH IS IT, MJ?

TELL ME IT WAS DIVINE REVELATION, OR A HUNCH...TELL ME YOU GOT SOMETHING IN THE MAIL, OR ED MCMAHON CAME TO THE DOOR AND--

TELL ME IT WAS ANYTHING, MJ, AND I'LL BELIEVE IT, ANYTHING EXCEPT--

--EXCEPT THAT YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING THIS FROM ME, ALL THESE YEARS. TELL ME ANYTHING BUT THAT, MJ. BECAUSE I DON'T THINK--

--I DON'T THINK I COULD STAND IT.

I'M SORRY, PETER, I--

I'M SORRY.

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND... ALL MY LIFE, PEOPLE HAVE COME TO ME, TRUSTING ME WITH THINGS THEY'D NEVER TELL ANYONE ELSE. I DON'T KNOW WHY, I DON'T GO OUT OF MY WAY, IT JUST...

...IT JUST HAPPENS, THAT'S ALL.

SO THIS *JUST HAPPENED*, IS THAT IT? AND IT *JUST HAPPENED* THAT YOU DECIDED TO KEEP IT TO YOURSELF ALL THESE...ALL THESE...

JESUS, MJ...

I DIDN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE SHE ASKED ME NOT TO. BEGGED ME NOT TO. SHE WAS SCARED, DESPERATE, SHE--

I GAVE HER MY WORD, PETER. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT'S LIKE. YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, TO SWEAR SOMETHING SO DEEPLY THAT YOU JUST CAN'T--

GREAT POWER. GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. YOU MADE THAT VOW ON BEN'S GRAVE, AND KEPT IT IN HIS MEMORY. WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO LESS?

SHE THOUGHT IT WOULD DESTROY YOU. AND AT THAT TIME, SHE WAS RIGHT. YOU WERE HALF-MAD WITH GRIEF, YOU WERE--

I KNOW WHAT I WAS, MJ. I REMEMBER EVERY SECOND OF IT.

BUT WHAT ABOUT LATER? WHAT ABOUT THE *YEARS* WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER SINCE THEN?

I--

--HOW DO YOU JUST BRING SOMETHING LIKE THAT UP? *"HERE'S YOUR EGGS, PETER, OH, AND BY THE WAY, ABOUT GWEN...."*

HOW COULD I SAY SOMETHING THAT COULD DESTROY THE MEMORY OF THE ONE PERSON YOU LOVED ALMOST AS MUCH--

--ALMOST AS MUCH AS YOU LOVE ME.

MAYBE MORE.

I'M SO SORRY, PETER, I'M--

TELL ME EVERYTHING.

TELL ME *ALL* OF IT.

GWEN HAD BARELY GOTTEN BACK INTO TOWN WHEN WE FOUND OUT THAT HARRY OSBORN HAD OVERDOSED ON LSD, AND HIS FATHER WOULDN'T TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL FOR FEAR OF THE SCANDAL.

I GOT THERE AS FAST AS I COULD.

"WE TOOK TURNS WATCHING OVER HARRY, TALKING TO HIM. THE ACID MUST'VE BEEN LACED WITH STRYCHNINE, BECAUSE HE KEPT SPASMING, GOING IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS, HE COULD BARELY BREATHE...WE WERE TERRIFIED HE WAS GOING TO DIE.

SLAM!

"THEN WE HEARD HIS FATHER COME IN DOWNSTAIRS. I WAS GOING TO TALK TO HIM, TELL HIM THAT WE NEEDED TO GET HARRY TO THE HOSPITAL, BUT--"

NO. I'LL DO IT.

ARE YOU SURE?

POSITIVE. IF ANYTHING CHANGES WITH HARRY, YELL, ALL RIGHT?

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

"AFTER A LITTLE WHILE, HARRY'S BREATHING STABILIZED A BIT, AND HE FINALLY FELL ASLEEP. THEN I REALIZED--

"-- I REALIZED THAT GWEN HAD BEEN GONE FOR AN AWFULLY LONG TIME.

"I KNEW THAT NORMAN HAD BEEN ACTING STRANGELY FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I DIDN'T THINK TOO MUCH ABOUT IT. I JUST WANTED TO SEE WHAT WAS TAKING GWEN SO LONG.

"WANTED TO MAKE SURE SHE WAS OKAY.

"THEN I HEARD VOICES.

"ARGUING.

"AND EVERY DAY SINCE, I WISH I WOULD'VE TURNED BACK. BUT I DIDN'T.

"I DIDN'T."

YOU CAN'T DO THIS! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!

NO? WATCH ME.

YOU'LL NEVER GET YOUR HANDS ON THEM.

AND IF YOU DON'T LET US TAKE HARRY TO THE HOSPITAL, IF YOU DON'T LET US HELP HIM, I--

YOU'LL WHAT?

YOU THINK YOU'RE LOOKING AT A SCANDAL NOW? WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN IF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOUND OUT THE TRUTH?

NO?

YOU WOULDN'T DARE.

NO.

I WON'T LET YOU USE THEM AGAINST ME, GWEN. I WON'T ALLOW IT.

THOSE CHILDREN ARE *MINE*, GWEN. NOT YOURS! *MINE!*

*MINE.*

I NEED AN HEIR. HARRY'S USELESS, A WEAKLING. BROKEN. INEFFECTUAL. NOT A FIT SON. NOT AN OSBORN. WITH THESE TWO, I CAN START FRESH--

NO.

I CAN SAY I ADOPTED THEM, BUT I'LL KNOW, *I'LL* KNOW THAT OSBORN BLOOD RUNS THROUGH THEM, OSBORN STRENGTH, OSBORN--

I SAID *NO!*

I'LL NEVER LET YOU NEAR THEM. YOU'VE DESTROYED THE LIFE OF ONE SON, YOU DON'T CARE IF HE LIVES OR DIES!

I'LL DIE BEFORE I LET YOU LAY A FINGER ON MY CHILDREN. DO YOU HEAR ME?

I SAID, DO YOU HEAR ME?

YES... I HEAR YOU...

...AND YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL...WHAT YOU WISH FOR, GWEN...VERY, VERY CAREFUL.

AND IF YOU SHOULD DECIDE TO...SAVE ME FROM THIS TERRIBLE SCANDAL... WHO DO YOU THINK WILL TAKE YOU WITH TWO CHILDREN? WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT YOU LIKE THAT?

NO ONE. NO ONE.

YOU'RE WRONG.

PETER LOVES ME, AND I LOVE HIM. I'LL TELL HIM THE WHOLE STORY. HE'LL ACCEPT ME, AND THEM.

HE'S THE ONLY MAN FIT TO RAISE THESE CHILDREN AS THEIR FATHER. NOT YOU.

*NEVER* YOU.

SO WHAT'LL IT BE, NORMAN? HOW DO YOU WANT THIS TO GO?

LET ME THINK ABOUT IT. DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, I SUPPOSE. HARRY'S NO USE TO ME, ANYWAY. HE MEANS NOTHING. AS TO THE REST--

AS TO THE REST...THERE'S ONE LAST THING I NEED TO ASK YOU.

THE TWINS WERE BORN TWO MONTHS EARLY, IN FRANCE, WHILE I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO, BUT--

--BUT THEY WERE BORN FULLY GROWN. AS IF THEY'D AGED NINE MONTHS IN JUST SEVEN. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT WOULD CAUSE SUCH A--

IT'S WHAT I SAID EARLIER.

THEY HAVE OSBORN BLOOD, AND OSBORN BLOOD...IS *SPECIAL* BLOOD. AND THEY...

...THEY WILL BE SPECIAL CHILDREN.

MY LEGACY. MY *TRUE* LEGACY.

YOU'RE INSANE.

OH, NO. I'M NOT THE ONE WHO'S INSANE. THAT WOULD BE YOU. AND THAT FOOL, PARKER.

ROMANTIC FOOL.

"IT WAS... SHE WAS...

"...GOD, PETER..."

HOW...

...UH-HURRMMH....

...HOW DID IT HAPPEN? DID SHE--

SHE SAID SHE'D GONE TO SEE HIM SEVEN MONTHS EARLIER ON SOMETHING ELSE, AND FOUND HIM UPSET, SAD, ALMOST BROKEN--

--AND I FELT SO BADLY FOR HIM, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, UNDER IT ALL, THERE WAS THIS STRENGTH, THIS MAGNETISM--

"--AS THOUGH THERE WAS THE PERSON I KNEW ON THE OUTSIDE, AND DEEP INSIDE, THIS OTHER PERSON, SO POWERFUL, YET SO MYSTERIOUS."

I DIDN'T INTEND FOR IT TO HAPPEN, BUT IT WAS AS IF THERE WAS SOMETHING INSIDE HIM THAT WAS SO STRONG, I COULDN'T WALK AWAY, I JUST....

...IT JUST HAPPENED. AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW--

--SHE WAS PREGNANT.

SHE SWORE ME TO SILENCE, JUST THE WAY I TOLD YOU. THEN WE WENT TO CHECK IN ON HARRY...

"...AND YOU ARRIVED."

HIS FATHER DOESN'T WANT TO TAKE HARRY TO A HOSPITAL. I THINK HE'S AFRAID THAT THE STOCKS IN HIS COMPANY WILL FALL EVEN FURTHER IF IT COMES OUT THAT THE FAMOUS NORMAN OSBORN'S SON HAD A RUN-IN WITH LSD.

I SHOULD TALK TO NORMAN--

NO...PETER, DON'T.

BUT--

PLEASE...IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD AND I JUST...I CAN'T FACE HIM RIGHT NOW. I'M... I'M EXHAUSTED. WE BOTH ARE.

CAN WE JUST... GO SOMEWHERE FOR A BIT?

SURE...I'M SORRY, I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT. YOU AND MJ, YOU'VE BEEN HERE ALL DAY, MAKING SURE HARRY'S OKAY. YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.

I'LL CATCH UP. I HAVE TO GET MY PURSE.

I RAN INTO NORMAN ON THE WAY IN, HE WAS HALF-CRAZY... I DON'T GET IT.

"HE SEEMED OKAY THE LAST FEW MONTHS...

"...BUT IT'S LIKE SOMETHING INSIDE HIM HAS SNAPPED SUDDENLY."

"PETER, DO YOU LOVE ME?"

WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT? OF COURSE I LOVE YOU.

WOULD YOU LOVE ME NO MATTER WHAT I TOLD YOU? NO MATTER WHAT MAY HAPPEN BETWEEN US?

OF COURSE I WOULD. WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT? DON'T BE SILLY.

IT'S NOT--

OKAY, READY. LET'S GET THE HECK OUT OF DODGE BEFORE THIS GETS TOO WEIRD EVEN FOR THE THREE MUSKETEERS.

YOU'RE MIXING METAPHORS.

WHATEVER.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE--

I'M...I'M FINE, PETER. THERE'S TIME.

"THERE'S ALWAYS TIME."

IT MAKES SENSE NOW.

IT ALL MAKES SENSE NOW.

WHEN HE CHANGED TO THE GOBLIN, HE WAS FOCUSED ON COMING AFTER ME, BUT HE WOULD'VE *HAD* TO APPROACH IT THAT WAY. HE COULD NEVER ADMIT TO HIMSELF THAT HE WASN'T *JUST* AFTER ME...HE WAS AFTER GWEN AS WELL. HE COULDN'T ADMIT TO HIMSELF THE HORROR OF WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO.

"NONETHELESS...THAT'S WHY HE TOOK GWEN. THERE WERE SO MANY OTHERS I CARED ABOUT THAT HE COULD HAVE GONE AFTER...YOU, AUNT MAY...BUT HE SPECIFICALLY WENT FOR HER."

IT WOULD BE A TWO-FER...AND A GOOD BUSINESSMAN LIKE NORMAN ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO GET THE MOST BANG FOR HIS BUCK.

NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A LOT OF THINGS ARE STARTING TO MAKE SENSE.

"IT WAS NORMAN'S... THE GOBLIN'S ACCELERATED HEALING FACTOR THAT LET HIM SURVIVE AN IMPACT THAT SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM.

"THE MODIFICATIONS TO HIS GENETIC STRUCTURE WOULD HAVE BEEN PASSED ON TO THE TWINS IN A WAY THAT SPED UP THEIR DEVELOPMENT...WHICH EXPLAINS WHY THEY WERE BORN PREMATURELY BUT FULLY GROWN, AND HOW THEY AGED NEARLY TO ADULTHOOD IN THE RELATIVELY SHORT TIME SINCE GWEN DIED.

"AS SOON AS NORMAN COULD TRAVEL, HE WENT TO EUROPE. I COULD NEVER FIGURE OUT... WHY EUROPE? HE HAD MONEY, RESOURCES, HE COULD HAVE HID OUT ANYWHERE HERE IN THE STATES.

"NOW, I THINK I KNOW WHY.

"DID HE ALSO GO THROUGH HER PAPERS? FIND HER LETTERS TO ME?

"DID HE THROW OUT SOME, AND KEEP OTHERS?

"THE ONES HE'D NEED TO CONVINCE THEM THAT I WAS THEIR FATHER? THAT I'D GOTTEN GWEN PREGNANT AND ABANDONED THEM?

"AND THAT SPIDER-MAN, NOT THE GREEN GOBLIN, WAS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR HER DEATH?

"IT WAS PERFECT, BECAUSE IN SO DOING, HE ENSURED THAT SOMEDAY THEY WOULD COME AFTER ONE OR THE OTHER OF US, AND IN SO DOING, GET BOTH.

ALL THE YEARS HE KEPT COMING BACK AT ME FROM THE SHADOWS, OBSESSED WITH ME...ON ONE LEVEL, BECAUSE I EMBODIED THE SON HE'D WANTED...BUT ON ANOTHER LEVEL, HATING ME BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE GWEN HAD WANTED TO BE THE FATHER TO HER CHILDREN...*HIS* CHILDREN.

IF HE COULD TURN ME, AND RAISE THEM AS HE WANTED, WE'D BE ONE BIG, HAPPY GOBLIN FAMILY.

IT ALL LINES UP, MJ.

HE WAS A SICK MAN, PETER. INSANE--

"--UPSET, SAD, ALMOST BROKEN--"

--AND I FELT SO BADLY FOR HIM, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, UNDER IT ALL, THERE WAS THIS STRENGTH, THIS MAGNETISM--

"--AS THOUGH THERE WAS THE PERSON I KNEW ON THE OUTSIDE, AND DEEP INSIDE, THIS OTHER PERSON, SO POWERFUL, YET SO MYSTERIOUS."

DID SHE SAY--

I LOVE YOU.

"DID SHE SAY--"

DID SHE SAY IF SHE'D EVER... IF HE WAS THE FIRST MAN TO--

"--TO--

"--NO, I--

"--I CAN'T... NO--

"--NO--

OSBORN!

PETER!

PETER! STOP!

PLEASE! PETER--

--STOP IT PLEASE...I'M HERE...I'M HERE, PETER, COME BACK TO ME--

--I LOVE YOU--

--COME BACK TO ME, PETER...LET GO...LET GO...

LET GO. LET IT GO. LET THE RAGE GO. I LOVE YOU. PLEASE.

PLEASE.

MJ...

...OH, GOD...

I KNOW, I KNOW...

I KNOW.

SO.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

YOU MEAN...DO I HATE YOU FOR KEEPING THIS FROM ME?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

NO. FOR A MOMENT, I--

NO. I DON'T. I LOVE YOU. NOTHING CHANGES THAT. IT'S JUST... HARD, THAT'S ALL.

AND THE HARDEST THING...IS REALIZING WHAT I HAVE TO DO NOW.

WHAT'S THAT?

THE CHANGES IN NORMAN'S DNA HAVE CAUSED GWEN'S KIDS TO AGE ABNORMALLY. FROM THE WAY THEY TALK, FROM THE ANGER THEY HAVE TOWARD ME, I THINK THEY KNOW WHAT I KNOW NOW.

THAT THEY'RE DYING. THEY'RE GOING TO KEEP AGING PREMATURELY UNTIL IT KILLS THEM.

I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN, MJ. THEY'RE ALL THAT'S LEFT OF GWEN. I CAN'T LET THEM DIE. I CAN'T LET THEM THINK I ABANDONED THEM AND KILLED THEIR MOTHER.

I HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO SAVE THEM, MJ. FOR GWEN. TO PUT SOME OF THIS TO RIGHTS AGAIN. I HAVE TO SAVE THEM. SOMEHOW.

ASSUMING THEY DON'T KILL ME FIRST.

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OKAY. SO LET'S LOOK AT WHAT WE KNOW, AND WHAT WE DON'T KNOW.

WE KNOW THAT GABRIEL AND SARAH ARE GWEN'S CHILDREN BUT NOT YOURS, THAT THEY WERE FATHERED BY NORMAN OSBORN, THAT THEY'RE AGING PREMATURELY BECAUSE OF THE FORMULA NORMAN USED WHEN HE BECAME THE GREEN GOBLIN...

CHECK.

...AND THAT THEY THINK YOU'RE THEIR DAD AND THE MAN WHO MURDERED THEIR MOTHER, WHICH IS WHY THEY WANT TO KILL YOU.

CHECK.

WE ALSO KNOW THAT UNLESS YOU CAN HELP THEM, THEY'LL CONTINUE TO AGE AT AN ADVANCED RATE UNTIL THEY DIE OF OLD AGE.

ALSO CHECK.

SO WHAT DON'T WE KNOW?

WHAT THE FREAK WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT.

I MEAN, WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO CONTACT THEM, AND IF WE WAIT FOR THEM TO COME TO US AGAIN, IT'LL PROBABLY BE TO KILL YOU OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU. SO WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

THERE IS A WAY. BUT IT INVOLVES THE ONE THING THAT I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO AVOID BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST DANGEROUS. ONCE LOOSED... IT'S AS UNSTOPPABLE AS THE JUGGERNAUT AND TWICE AS UGLY.

# SINS PAST

## PART FIVE

--WHERE WE RECEIVED THE ASTONISHING NEWS THAT SPIDER-MAN IS ABOUT TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE.

ASTONISHING, SPECTACULAR AND AMAZING NEWS, BEN.

SO NOW WE TURN FOR AN OPINION TO A NEW MEMBER OF THE FAMILY HERE AT CHANNEL 23 NEWS... RAY HASTINGS, OUR RESIDENT EXPERT ON ALL THINGS SPIDER-MAN.

SO, RAY, HAS THERE EVER BEEN A CASE PRIOR TO THIS WHERE SPIDER-MAN HAS CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE?

WELL, BEN, AS YOU CAN SEE, I'VE COLLECTED NEWS CLIPPINGS, PHOTOS AND VIDEO FOOTAGE OF SPIDER-MAN'S ACTIVITIES EVER SINCE HE APPEARED ON THE SCENE. FOR INSTANCE--

--THIS RARE FOOTAGE FROM HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH GALACTUS.

HEY! HEY! HEY-HEY-HEY-HEY-HEY!

AND THIS IS FROM THE TIME HE GOT BETWEEN A SENTINEL AND ITS PREY.

CAREFUL, PAL, THAT'S NOT A BAG OF PEANUTS YOU'RE SQUEEZING THERE, YOU KNOW.

SOME OF IT IS DRAWN FROM NEWS SERVICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD, AND SOME OF IT COMES FROM MY OWN EXTENSIVE ARCHIVE OF FILM I SHOT PERSONALLY, HERE ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY.

WHAT THE ⇒BLEEP⇐ IS WRONG WITH YOU? I ALMOST HAD DOCTOR DOOM UNTIL I TRIPPED OVER YOU AND THIS STUPID ⇒BLEEP⇐ CAMERA! NOW STOP ⇒BLEEP⇐ FOLLOWING ME! IF I SEE YOU AGAIN, I'LL ⇒BLEEP⇐ YOUR ⇒BLEEP⇐ CAMERA UP YOUR ⇒BLEEP⇐ ⇒BLEEP⇐ ⇒BLEEEEEEEEP⇐

UHM, RAY--

I ALSO HAVE A NUMBER OF IMAGES OF SPIDER-MAN FROM ALT.BINARIES.SPIDERSTALKER, AND THIS ONE IN PARTICULAR IS--

--NO, WAIT, THAT'S ANGELINA JOLIE FROM ALT.FAKES, JUST A SECOND--

RAY--

IT'S RIGHT HERE--

RAY, BEN HERE.

YES, BEN?

THAT'S AN AMAZING COLLECTION, BUT THE MAIN THING WE NEED TO DETERMINE RIGHT NOW IS, HAS SPIDER-MAN EVER HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE BEFORE?

NO IDEA. I MAINLY, YOU KNOW, GOT THE FIGHTS AND WHEN HE APPEARED WITH SOMEBODY ELSE, AND--

POSSIBLY. MAYBE. I CAN'T BE SURE.

BACK TO YOU, BEN.

AND NOW WE GO LIVE TO THE STEPS OF THE DAILY BUGLE, WHERE WE JOIN THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN PROGRESS.

IS IT TRUE YOU'RE ABOUT TO RETIRE?

NO, I--

THE A.P. SAYS YOU'RE GOING TO REVEAL YOUR IDENTITY, SAME AS MATT MURDOCK--

THAT'S NOT--

YES, BUT--

HEY! CAN WE HAVE SOME CALM FOR JUST A SECOND HERE? THANK YOU.

I JUST WANT TO SEND A PUBLIC MESSAGE TO TWO PEOPLE.

THIS IS TO GABRIEL AND SARAH. YOUR LIVES ARE IN JEOPARDY. I HAVE TO SEE YOU. MEET ME AT--

--MEET ME AT THE PLACE WHERE I SAW YOUR MOTHER FOR THE LAST TIME.

THAT'S ALL.

I SAID GET THIS FREAK SHOW OFF MY FRONT STEPS! THIS IS A NEWSPAPER OFFICE, NOT A CIRCUS! DO I LOOK LIKE I'M WEARING BIG FLOPPY SHOES AND A RED CLOWN NOSE?

OKAY, WHO SAID YES? I WANT NAMES!

MORE AFTER THIS WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR.

NICK...CAN YOU FOLLOW HIM?

I'M *IATSE* LOCAL ONE. FIRST IN THE COUNTRY.

I CAN FOLLOW *ANY*DAMNBODY.

GO! GO! GO! GO!

Life is never what you expect it to be, is it?

I swore, long ago, that I'd never stand up here again. I never wanted to see this view again.

But then, who in this world gets everything he asks for?

Half an hour in...and I can feel them now. Coming up the cables behind me. I could move, but I can't risk scaring them away before I say what I have to say. Have to let them get close.

Closer.

Closer still...until...

WE'RE HERE. SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY. BUT IF YOU TRY ANYTHING--

NO. NO TRICKS. JUST THE TRUTH.

"BECAUSE THE TRUTH IS LONG OVERDUE."

ARE WE GETTING AUDIO?

NEGATIVE. THEY'RE TOO FAR EVEN FOR THE 'SCOPE TO PICK IT UP.

DO YOU WANT TO GO LIVE, GET THIS ON THE AIR BEFORE ANYBODY ELSE GETS HERE?

I FIGURE WITH ALL THE CELL PHONES DOWN THERE, WE'RE GONNA HAVE COMPANY IN TEN, FIFTEEN MINUTES. WE CAN BEAT 'EM ALL TO THIS. JUST SAY THE WORD.

SO... DO WE GO?

WE GO. PUNCH US INTO THE LIVE FEED.

"WHATEVER'S GOING ON UP THERE, IT HAS TO BE PRETTY IMPORTANT FOR SPIDER-MAN TO GO THIS FAR OUT OF HIS WAY. BETTER WE GET THE SCOOP THAN SOMEBODY ELSE."

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, BUT I WANTED YOU TO UNDERSTAND.

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I THINK I KNOW. LET ME KNOW IF I GET ANYTHING WRONG.

YOU THINK I'M YOUR FATHER. YOU THINK I ABANDONED GWEN, KILLED HER, AND LEFT YOU ALONE OVERSEAS TO FEND FOR YOURSELVES. YOU FOUND THOSE LETTERS, OR WERE GIVEN THEM, AND FINALLY YOU HAD A NAME TO GO WITH YOUR PAIN.

SO YOU CAME TO DESTROY MY LIFE THE WAY YOU THINK I DESTROYED YOURS.

THAT ABOUT COVER IT?

YEAH, THAT COVERS IT. EXCEPT WE DON'T THINK YOU'RE OUR FATHER, WE KNOW. IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EXPLAINS US. WE'RE STRONGER AND FASTER THAN NORMAL PEOPLE, AND--

AND YOU'RE AGING FASTER THAN NORMAL PEOPLE, AREN'T YOU?

YOU'RE DYING, AREN'T YOU?

BOTH OF YOU.

AGING TWO OR THREE YEARS FOR EVERY YEAR IN REAL TIME. MAYBE EVEN FASTER. LIKE PROGERIA, YOUR AGING HAS BEEN ACCELERATED.

IT'S ONLY YOUR STRENGTH THAT'S KEPT YOU FROM BEING DESTROYED BY IT.

WHICH IS THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO THANK YOU FOR.

JUST ONE PROBLEM. I'M NOT YOUR FATHER. YOUR FATHER...WAS A MAN NAMED NORMAN OSBORN, AND--

THAT'S NOT TRUE!

NORMAN SAVED US. HE CAME TO US WHEN WE WERE JUST INFANTS--

"--HE MADE A HOME FOR US, EVEN THOUGH HE COULDN'T BE THERE MOST OF THE TIME.

"HE SAW THAT OUR BRAINS WERE MATURING AS FAST AS OUR BODIES, AND HE BROUGHT IN THE BEST TEACHERS--

"--HE TRAINED US TO BE EVERYTHING WE KNEW WE COULD BE, EVERYTHING HE WANTED US TO BE. HE BELIEVED IN US.

"AND HE TOLD US ALL ABOUT YOU."

PARKER SAID HE LOVED YOUR MOTHER, BUT HE DIDN'T. HE RAN. HE RAN AWAY FROM HIS OBLIGATIONS, FROM HER, FROM YOU. THEN SPIDER-MAN KILLED HER, SENT HER TO HER DEATH.

ONE DAY, YOU WILL AVENGE HER BY KILLING THEM. BUT NOT UNTIL THE TIME IS RIGHT, NOT UNLESS I... FALL.

YOU ARE MY LIVING TRUST, MY WILL, AND MY WILL MADE MANIFEST. ONCE YOU HAVE DONE ALL THIS, THEN AND ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE WORTHY OF MY INHERITANCE, MY...LEGACY.

BECAUSE IN A WORLD WHERE I AM NOT, HE ALSO MUST NOT BE. TO ALLOW HIM--THAT IS, THEM--TO CONTINUE IN A WORLD WITHOUT ME WOULD BE A PROFOUND...IMBALANCE. THAT'S WHY YOU MUST GO AFTER BOTH OF THEM.

IN THAT WAY, WE CAN BE SURE YOU DON'T MISS THE TARGET.

--CONFIRMED, WE HAVE THREE SUSPECTS ON THE BRIDGE. THEY ARE ON THE SUPPORT CABLES, REPEAT, THEY ARE ON THE SUPPORT CABLES. IF THEY TAKE ACTION, THEY COULD DAMAGE THE CABLES AND WEAKEN THE BRIDGE, ENDANGERING CIVILIANS IN THE AREA.

POLICE

SUSPECTS ARE TO BE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY FOR POSSIBLE TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. IF THERE IS ANY RESISTANCE, LETHAL FORCE IS AUTHORIZED.

"YOU'RE LYING. WHY WOULD NORMAN DO THIS?"

WHAT POLICE

IT WOULD TAKE TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN NORMAN'S MOTIVATIONS, THE REASONS HE DID THIS...IT'S TAKEN ME YEARS TO EVEN START TO FIGURE IT OUT MYSELF. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS.

NORMAN HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO A FORMULA THAT GAVE HIM TREMENDOUS STRENGTH AND SPEED. IT ALSO DESTROYED HIS MIND. BUT IT DID SOMETHING ELSE AS WELL. IT INCREASED HIS HEALING ABILITIES, SO HIS METABOLISM WORKED INCREDIBLY FAST.

IF THAT CHANGE WAS ENCODED INTO HIS DNA, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PASSED ON TO YOU...AND IT COULD HAVE AFFECTED YOUR NATURAL AGING PROCESS, SPEEDING IT UP CONSIDERABLY.

IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING, YOU COULD BE DEAD OF OLD AGE WITHIN JUST A MATTER OF A FEW YEARS. I CAN HELP YOU. YOU CAN TRUST ME--

SORRY--

I DON'T TRUST YOU.

I KNOW. I KNOW YOU DON'T TRUST ME.

BUT *SHE* DOES.

SARAH...?

GABE, LISTEN TO ME--

WHAT'RE YOU--

I TOLD YOU I FOLLOWED HIM TO THE DNA TESTING LAB. HE RAN OUR MOTHER'S DNA THROUGH THE SYSTEM.

BUT HE NEVER RAN HIS OWN.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT EVER SINCE. IF HE HAD TO RUN TESTS TO CONFIRM WHO AND WHAT WE ARE, WHY WOULD HE HAVE TO--

"--TO DO ALL OF THAT JUST TO GET A SAMPLE OF HER DNA IN ORDER TO DO A CROSS-CHECK?

UNLESS...UNLESS HE *KNEW* WE COULDN'T BE HIS CHILDREN... BECAUSE HE AND OUR MOTHER HAD NEVER...IF THEY HADN'T--

"WHY NOT JUST USE HIS OWN?"

THAT'S NOT TRUE! IT CAN'T BE TRUE! SARAH, ALL OUR LIVES, NORMAN WAS THERE, HE WAS... HE WAS OUR ANCHOR, OUR SALVATION...HE WAS--

HE WAS--

--HE WAS THE GREEN GOBLIN. MAYBE YOU HEARD ABOUT HIM. HE WAS INSANE. HE WAS A KILLER.

AND HE'S THE ONE WHO KILLED YOUR MOTHER. NOT ME. NORMAN.

"RIGHT HERE. RIGHT WHERE WE'RE STANDING."

THAT'S NOT TRUE! HE LOVED US!

GABE! NO!

HE BROUGHT HER HERE, AND HE KILLED HER... THE MAN YOU LOVED, THE MAN YOU ADORED, THE MAN YOU THOUGHT WAS YOUR SALVATION... AND ALL ALONG HE WAS USING YOU, WARPING YOU...TEACHING YOU TO HATE ME WHEN ALL ALONG HE WAS THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH. HE--

ENOUGH OF THIS! I'LL KILL YOU RIGHT HERE AND NOW, I SWEAR IT!

UNNHOO

Got to get him off me but I don't want to hurt him--

Unfortunately, he has no such compunctions.

...KILL YOU... KILL YOU, YOU SONOFA--

KUNKKK!

God...to save his life--

--am I going to have to cripple him?

GABE, STOP IT! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S HOLDING BACK? LISTEN TO HIM...LISTEN TO *ME*--

NO... NO MORE TALK--

--TIME TO DIE.

Have to fight back, even if it means--

WHAT THE--

KA-CHOW!

NO...

...I thought we had more time, how did they get here so--

YOU ARE ORDERED TO SURRENDER OR WE WILL USE LETHAL FORCE! YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS!

POLICE

SEE? YOU SEE HOW HE WORKS? HE PROMISES WE'LL BE SAFE... BUT ARRANGES FOR THE POLICE TO DO HIS WORK FOR HIM.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT! PLEASE, GABE, ALL I'M SAYING IS--

IT'S THE SAME THING ALL OVER...LIES, SARAH...ALL LIES--

DIE!

No...this is going totally wrong--

--tragically wrong!

WE'VE GOT GUNFIRE! I REPEAT, WE'VE GOT GUNFIRE!

TAKE THEM DOWN!

Got to stop this before it gets even further out of control!

It's a clear drop to the water below, and he's strong enough to survive the fall. Then I can--

BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BLAM!BL

NO!

G-GABE...? I--

--I'VE BEEN...I'VE BEEN--

...SHOT....

SARAH!

No...I won't let it happen...I won't let it HAPPEN AGAIN!

So many times I relived that moment, thinking how I could have done it differently...replaying it every time--

--asking God for one chance, just one chance, to do it right.

I won't fail this time... not with her daughter... it's all I have of her...I won't fail...I won't fail--

I--

--WON'T--

--FAIL HER--

--AGAIN!

I'VE GOT YOU!

I'VE GOT YOU....

I'VE GOT YOU.

SARAH! SARAH!

Stay with me... stay with me...just a little longer.

SHE WAS SHOT.

BY A ROBBER.

SHE GETS IMMEDIATE TREATMENT OR I'LL TEAR THIS PLACE APART WITH MY BARE HANDS.

ANYONE GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?

LOOK LADY, I KNOW YOU'VE GOT OTHER PEOPLE HERE, BUT I'M A COMPOSER, OKAY? MY HAND IS DISLOCATED! IF I CAN'T USE MY HAND, I CAN'T COMPOSE, AND IF I CAN'T COMPOSE--

HEY!

--THEN YOU CAN DECOMPOSE FOR ALL I CARE, BUT YOU'RE NOT TAKING CUTS IN LINE, I--

HEY!

"SARAH..."

...I'D ALWAYS WANTED US TO COME HERE TOGETHER, AFTER WE FINISHED OUR WORK. AFTER WE'D AVENGED OUR MOTHER, AND KILLED THE MAN WHO TOOK HER LIFE.

I MEMORIZED THE INSTRUCTIONS, THE MAP, AND WAITED FOR THIS DAY...BUT NOW I HAVE TO COME HERE ON MY OWN, TO GET WHAT WE NEED TO EVEN THE SCORE, FOR ME TO SAVE YOU FROM HIM...

...SAVE YOU FROM THE MONSTER.

SAVE YOU FROM THE LIES.

WE'LL DESTROY HIM, DESTROY HIS FAMILY, KILL EVERYONE HE CARES ABOUT.

I'LL FREE YOU, AND WE'LL BRING OUT THE TRUTH, ONCE AND FOR ALL. WE'LL--

NO...NO... IT CAN'T BE... IT CAN'T--

NO!!!

#514

# Sins Past

Part Six

NO...NO, IT CAN'T BE... IT CAN'T--

WHIRRRRR CLICK WHIRRRRR

VOICE IDENTIFICATION CONFIRMED.

BEGIN PROGRAM.

STAND BY TO RECEIVE.

HELLO, MY CHILDREN... GABRIEL, SARAH...WELCOME. I SPEAK TO YOU FROM THE SHADOWS...OR FROM THE GRAVE...DEPENDING ON WHEN YOU HEAR THIS RECORDING.

IF YOU HAVE FOUND THIS PLACE, THEN TWO CONDITIONS HAVE LIKELY BEEN MET. THE FIRST...IS THAT YOU ARE READY TO INHERIT YOUR LEGACY AS MY HEIRS.

YOU KNOW BY NOW THAT YOUR MOTHER WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO WEAK, TOO SOFT TO LEAD YOU INTO THIS GRAND DESTINY. SHE WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED IT.

AND NEITHER WOULD YOU.

NO...NO... THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.

YOU SAID YOU LOVED US.

YOU SAID YOU LOVED US!

YOU SAID HE KILLED HER!

THE SECOND CONDITION THAT SHOULD BE TRUE IF YOU HAVE FOUND THIS PLACE...IS THAT YOU HAVE ALSO FOUND PETER PARKER. SPIDER-MAN.

YOU HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THEY ARE THE SAME MAN, AND THAT IN HIS OWN WAY, HE IS AS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH AS I WAS.

SHE DIED BECAUSE HE WAS A ROMANTIC FOOL. THEY BOTH WERE.

AND I AM ALIVE...BECAUSE I AM NOT.

AND NOW, IF YOU HAVE PERFORMED AS I TRAINED YOU, THEN HE HAS JOINED HER IN DEATH.

OR HE HAS JOINED YOU AT LAST...HAS TAKEN THE LAST STEP TO JOIN THE FAMILY THAT HAS AWAITED HIM ALL THESE YEARS. THE FAMILY WHOSE FLESH AND BLOOD RUN THROUGH YOUR BODIES.

WHOSE FACES YOU ARE ONLY NOW PREPARED TO WEAR.

"They are your true faces. That is what it is to be one of us, one of the family. The mask is your face... and the face beneath it is the mask you wear, the stranger even you do not recognize...except in the dark.

"And in here, with us, it is always dark."

HI, MR. SPIDER-MAN, I... UM...I'M LOOKING FOR MY SISTER...SHE CAME THROUGH HERE A WHILE AGO--

YES...SHE SAID SHE'D BE RIGHT BACK. AND THAT YOU SHOULD WAIT RIGHT HERE.

GOOD. SO I'LL...WAIT RIGHT HERE, THEN. IF YOU DON'T MIND.

NO. NO, IT'S FINE... MISS.

I SAW WHAT HAPPENED ON THE NEWS. ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH...I'M OKAY. IT'S SARAH I'M WORRIED ABOUT. THEY PULLED HER INTO SURGERY OVER TWO HOURS AGO TO WORK ON THE GUNSHOT.

EVERY TIME SOMEBODY'S GONE IN OR OUT OF THERE, THEY'VE BEEN RUNNING, AND THAT CAN'T BE GOOD, IT--

I SAVED HER AT THE BRIDGE, MJ. I SAVED HER AND I CAN'T LET HER DIE NOW, I JUST CAN'T, I--

I'M SORRY, IT'S--

IT'S OKAY, SWEETIE. YOU'RE JUST TIRED. THERE'S SO MUCH GOING ON--

YEAH... I KNOW, IT'S JUST...

I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

THERE YOU ARE--

DOCTOR CHAPIN, HOW'S SHE DOING?

NOT GOOD, I'M AFRAID.

BUT...THE NURSE SAID YOU GOT THE BULLET, AND THE WOUND--

IT DIDN'T HIT ANYTHING CRITICAL, AND WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO REPAIR MOST OF IT, THAT PART SEEMS TO BE HEALING ALMOST UNNATURALLY FAST, BUT--

THEN WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

IT'S--

--IT'S LOSS OF BLOOD. WE TYPED HER BLOOD, AND THERE'S PLENTY OF IT ON HAND, BUT EVERY TIME WE TRIED A DIRECT MATCH HER BODY REJECTED IT.

"THERE'S SOMETHING... ODD ABOUT HER BLOOD.

"IT'S BEEN ALTERED IN SOME WAY, SOME GENETIC MARKER THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE."

What was it Norman told Gwen?

*Osborn blood is special blood.*

The Goblin formula that affected Norman at a genetic level was born into her. Made her strong. Made her age prematurely.

And now it's killing her because it won't accept normal blood.

He won't let go... even now. He'll see her die before letting someone else have her...help her...

WE'RE DOING THE BEST WE CAN WITH SYNTHETIC PLASMA, BUT IT'S A HOLDING ACTION AT MOST. IF WE DON'T GET SOMEBODY WITH THE SAME GENETIC TRAITS DOWN HERE IN THE NEXT HOUR...

DOES SHE HAVE ANY NEXT OF KIN?

NO...NOBODY THAT COULD GET HERE INSIDE AN HOUR.

THEN I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO EXCEPT--

--WELL, EXCEPT USE THE SYNTHETICS FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, MAKE HER AS COMFORTABLE AS WE CAN UNTIL--

WELL. UNTIL. THE END.

I'M SORRY. THERE'S JUST... THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.

I LOVE YOU.

...NO. ...NO, IT CAN'T--

WAIT... DOC, WAIT!

USE MY BLOOD.

ARE YOU A RELATIVE?

NO, BUT... MY BLOOD TYPE IS THE SAME AS HERS.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

How do I say that even before I saw her DNA chart, I knew I had a 50/50 chance because--

Because I once asked Gwen what her blood type was, because...

Well, because you think about those things when you're planning to ask someone to marry you someday.

And God, she wanted kids so badly.

HOW I KNOW IS MY BUSINESS.

YES, BUT EVEN IF IT'S THE SAME TYPE, AS I SAID, HER BLOOD IS UNUSUAL, LIKE NOTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE--

YEAH, I KNOW.

BUT SO'S MINE, DOC.

SO'S MINE.

AND LET'S FACE IT...

"...WHAT DOES SHE HAVE TO LOSE?"

"YOU UNDERSTAND THOUGH, SPIDER-MAN, THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE A VERY HEAVY TRANSFUSION. IT'S NOT LIFE-THREATENING, BUT YOU MAY BLACK OUT FROM THE ABRUPT BLOOD LOSS, AND YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO STAY UNDER CARE FOR AT LEAST A DAY."

"I UNDERSTAND, DOC. I UNDERSTAND.

"JUST...DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO, BUT SAVE HER, DOC.

"SAVE HER."

GO GET HIM, TIGER.

KICK HIS ASS.

"KICK IT *HARD.*"

"You're dying... you know it, I know it..."

...AGING FASTER THAN YOU SHOULD.

BUT THERE'S HOPE.

AND I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE IT TO YOU.

WHEN I RECEIVED THE SERUM, IT NEARLY KILLED ME...BECAUSE I WAS NOT PREPARED FOR IT. THERE IS NO WAY ANYONE COULD HAVE BEEN PREPARED FOR THE POWER IT PROVIDED.

UNTIL NOW.

UNTIL YOU.

THE SERUM IS ALREADY IN YOUR BLOOD. IT IS MY LEGACY TO YOU. BUT FLAWED, BECAUSE IT HAS HER BLOOD IN IT AS WELL. THIS LED TO UNEXPECTED MUTATIONS IN YOUR GENETIC CODE, SO THAT THE RAPID HEALING FACTOR ALSO BECAME A RAPID AGING FACTOR.

SO WHAT IS NEEDED... IS A SECOND INJECTION, ONE THAT WILL COMPLETE THE WORK THAT BEGAN IN YOUR GENETIC CODE BEFORE YOU WERE EVEN BORN.

THE SERUM WILL SLOW OR EVEN HALT THE ADVANCED AGING... AND YOU WILL EMERGE EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN I WAS, AT THE HEIGHT OF MY ABILITIES.

IT MAY HAVE...UNFORESEEN EFFECTS ON YOUR MENTAL PROCESSING...DISRUPTIONS IN NORMAL FUNCTIONING, PARANOIA, PSYCHOSIS, EVEN SOME MEMORY LOSS...BUT IT BEATS DYING, RIGHT?

AND AFTER ALL, WHAT FAMILY DOESN'T HAVE ITS LITTLE...

...ECCENTRICITIES?

YOU'VE COME ALL THIS WAY--

...you've come all this way, Sarah--

--DON'T LET ME DOWN--

...don't give up...

IT'S THE ONLY WAY...YOU'RE MINE...AND I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO...NEVER LET YOU GO....

YOU'LL NEVER HAVE THEM! YOU HEAR ME? YOU'LL NEVER HAVE THEM, NORMAN!

AAAAAAAGGGHHH--

--HUCCCHHHH!

WE'RE GETTING A SOLID PULSE... HEARTBEAT AND RESPIRATION UP...

...WE'VE GOT HER...WE'VE GOT HER...MY GOD...

...MY GOD...

"...MY GOD..."

...YOU ALL RIGHT?

IF YOU'RE AWAKE, SAY SOMETHING, BECAUSE I CAN'T SEE YOUR EYES UNDER THERE.

...HEY...

HEY.

HOW'RE YOU FEELING?

LIKE I'VE BEEN HIT BY A TRUCK. REPEATEDLY.

DOC SAID YOU CAN EXPECT TO FEEL PRETTY DIZZY. SAID YOU SHOULDN'T STAND UP TOO FAST FOR A WHILE, NO EXERTION--

SO HOW IS SHE?

STABLE, BUT WE WON'T KNOW MUCH MORE FOR A FEW HOURS AT LEAST.

SOMETHING WRONG?

JUST KEEPING AN EYE OUT. ONE OF THE NURSES TRIED TO SLIP IN HERE WITH A CAMERA ABOUT AN HOUR AGO. SHE WAS GOING RIGHT FOR YOUR MASK.

WHERE IS SHE NOW?

IN RECOVERY.

BIG FEET. FOOD CART. CLUMSY ME. OOPSIE.

I LOVE YOU.

YOU'D BETTER.

SO WHAT PROMPTED HER TO TRY IT?

THE PRESS IS ALL OVER THE PLACE DOWNSTAIRS. THE STAFF IS KEEPING THEM OUT, BUT WORD'S OUT THEY'D PAY BIG MONEY FOR A PICTURE, ESPECIALLY IF IT'S ONE OF YOU, UNCONSCIOUS, WITH YOUR MASK OFF.

HOW MUCH?

FIVE MILLION.

LOOKS LIKE I PICKED THE WRONG TIME TO GIVE UP PHOTOGRAPHY. ANYBODY ASKING ABOUT WHAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS IN ALL THIS?

THEY THINK I'M A GROUPIE. APPARENTLY THEY GET 'EM HERE ANY TIME SOMEBODY IN A COSTUME GETS WOUNDED.

SUPER-GUYS HAVE GROUPIES? LOOKS LIKE I PICKED THE WRONG TIME TO GET MARR--

HEY!

JUST KIDDING, I--

WAIT A MINUTE... THE PRESS IS HERE?

HAS THIS GONE OUT ON THE TV YET?

YEAH, DOWNSTAIRS.

I HAVEN'T CHECKED, BUT I THINK SO. WHY?

...OH, NO...

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO! YOU'RE TRYING TO TAINT HER WITH YOUR BLOOD! MAKE HER A WEAKLING LIKE YOU! BUT IT WON'T WORK!

"SHE'LL DIE BEFORE THAT HAPPENS!"

HELP... SOMEONE HELP...

WHAT HAPPENED?

SOMEONE KNOCKED OUT THE GUARD...TOOK HIS GUN...AND THE GIRL, IN SURGERY, THE ONE SPIDER-MAN WAS HELPING, SHE--

--SHE'S GONE.

YOU'VE RUINED EVERYTHING! *EVERYTHING!*

...fast, incredibly fast... somehow he's been amped up...and I'm still weak as a kitten...got to get away from this or I'm dead...

...but this...doesn't take much energy...

...it's the holding on that's going to be a bitch...

NO!

UNNNNHHH!

--get it together NOW!

AHH!

I feel my shoulder dislocate on impact...can't get my bearings...damn it, Peter, get it together--

NNNNGGHH!

Can't move...can barely see...he's got me right in his sights...

...come on, Peter, don't go out like this, don't go down without a fight--

LOOK AT YOU...YOU'RE PATHETIC, ALMOST NOT WORTH KILLING.

ALMOST... BUT WE ALWAYS FINISH WHAT WE START--

--DON'T WE, SARAH?

S...SARAH?

POOR SPIDER-FOOL... YOU NEVER UNDERSTOOD, DID YOU?

THE TRUTH IS IN THE BLOOD... AND NOTHING WILL EVER CHANGE THAT.

FINISH HIM, SARAH, AND COME WITH ME. I HAVE SOMETHING...AMAZING TO SHOW YOU, I--

GABRIEL--

--GET OUT OF HERE.

WHAT ARE YOU--

HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO US, OR TO OUR MOTHER. HE SAVED MY LIFE. HE'S INNOCENT.

LITTLE SISTER... LITTLE FOOL...NO ONE IS INNOCENT. NOT HIM--

--AND IF YOU'VE TAKEN HIS SIDE, AGAINST YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD--

--NOT EVEN YOU.

WUMPH!

BAM!

BAM!

BAM!

NO--

--CAN'T GET CONTROL... GOT TO GET CLEAR...GOT TO GET--

--NO--

AHAGHHHHH!

SARAH...

...YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO...I SAW HOW HE WAS...HE WAS OUT OF HIS MIND, IT WASN'T EVEN GABRIEL ANY MORE...HE WAS GOING TO KILL YOU.

I KNOW, BUT--

--I CAN'T... I HAVE TO GO AWAY, I--

NO... WAIT, SARAH, PLEASE...

...WAIT...

"I'LL WAIT HERE FOR YOU, PETER."

THANKS, THIS...SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.

GOOD, THEN WE CAN HAVE A CHANCE TO SIT AND TALK. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, AND I HAVE A LOT TO TELL YOU. A LOT TO TALK ABOUT.

GREAT.

PETER? DO YOU BELIEVE IN DESTINY?

I... DON'T KNOW. WHY?

IT'S JUST... IT'S FUNNY...THERE ARE TIMES I FEEL AS IF I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR LONGER THAN I'VE KNOWN YOU...YOU'RE THAT MUCH A PART OF ME, AND YET--

--AND YET WHEN I TRY TO LOOK AHEAD, I CAN IMAGINE YOU COMING HOME FROM A HARD DAY'S WORK, PUTTING YOUR HEAD IN MY LAP TO SLEEP...BUT I CAN'T SEE MY FACE.

ISN'T THAT ODD?

NOT AT ALL. AFTER ALL, IF YOU'RE INSIDE YOUR OWN HEAD, HOW CAN YOU REALLY SEE YOURSELF?

YOUR LAP IS ALL MINE, GWEN. AND THE REST OF YOU AIN'T BAD EITHER.

YOU'RE SUCH A--

I LOVE YOU, PETER.

I LOVE YOU...

...I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU...

I KNOW.

SLEEP NOW.

--AND I WAS TALKING TO BARBS, AND SHE SAID SHE COULD TAKE THE BOYS FOR THE WEEKEND.

THAT'S GREAT, I--

BOBBY, DON'T STRAY TOO FAR, I--

DAD! LOOK!

OHMYGOD...

CALL 911... MY CELL'S IN THE CAR. AND GET A BLANKET.

RIGHT.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY...JUST DON'T MOVE...

HURT... I HURT ALL OVER...

THERE'S AN AMBULANCE ON THE WAY, YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

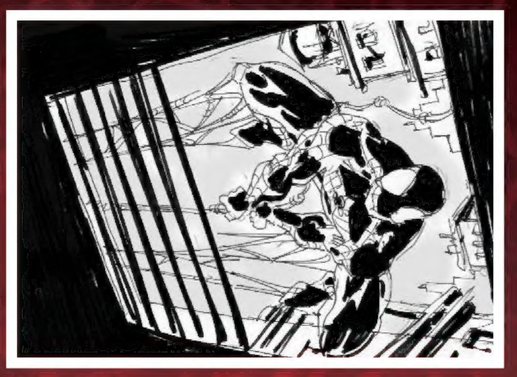
MY NAME...?

I DON'T...I DON'T REMEMBER...

...I DON'T REMEMBER...

END

# MIKE DEODATO JR.



## COVER SKETCHES

## ISSUE #509, PAGE 9

## ISSUE #509, PAGE 10

# Holy! Looks like--! It can't be...is it?

A stunning new evil emerges to stalk Peter Parker as the biggest Spider-Man event in years rocks the wall-crawler's world! The worst defeat that Peter Parker ever endured – a moment frozen in the minds of Spider-Man fans everywhere – was supposed to be far in his past. But now, two villains – ripped, perhaps, directly from that very moment – have emerged and they threaten to destroy everything that he holds dear!

Collecting *Amazing Spider-Man #509-514*, written by **J. Michael Straczynski** (TV's *Babylon 5*) and illustrated by **Mike Deodato Jr.** (*Incredible Hulk*).

MARVEL